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ABSTRACT

This document reports on a conference centered around three topics: voc. ional guidance in the Member States of the European Community (EC), the "Europeanization" of vocational guidance, and approaches to cross-frontier vocational guidance. Among the recommendations of the conference participants are the following: the tasks of vocational guidance for young people and adults should be taken into account in all relevant EC programs; regular meetings of senior staff of agencies responsible for the vocational guidance of young people and adults should be held; exchanges of ideas and reciprocal visits by practitioners are encouraged; cooperative agreements on the continuing training of counselors should be concluded; funds should be provided for projects, studies, and conferences; and agreements should be concluded on support for database systems and publications, such as a European guidance handbook, to help vocational guidance staff in their cross-frontier guidance work. A 12-item bibliography is included in the document. (CML)

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VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Findings of the conference on 7 and 8 December 1989 in Berlin, organized by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP)

Preliminary comment

The conference was originally planned as part of the CEDEFOP project "Vocational guidance and counselling for adults and especially the long-term unemployed". The theme was widened to include the future organization of vocational guidance for young people at Community level.

The first part of the conference thus focused on vocational guidance for adults, the second part on the possible options for concerted - if not integrated - Community-wide vocational guidance for all age groups in the single European market.

The conference proceedings

In opening the conference, Mr Politi, CEDEFOP's Deputy Director, emphasized the particular importance of the country studies that had been

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of vocational guidance and counselling for adults[1] and of the conference for the further development of the debate on vocational guidance in the various EC countries and at Community level. He felt the conference should make clear policy recommendations on the basis of the analyses and also set priorities which would produce results in the foreseeable future.

The conference chairman, Mrs Chomé, referred to the problem posed by the fact that vocational guidance had played a minor role in the European Community's political debate in the past: there was an urgent need for guidance services to be Europeanized for the future. She hoped the conference would address some practical recommendations to the Commission.

1. Vocational guidance in the Member States of the EC

Mr Köditz, the discussion leader, began with a lengthy review of the findings of the country reports on the state of vocational guidance and counselling for adults in Europe.[2]

He referred to the wide variation in the level of efforts in the various Member States and to the vocational and personal problems for adults with differing educational, social and economic backgrounds when they sought advice and were faced with a wide range of guidance methods and coordinated offers of guidance, initial and continuing training and employment. In general, Mr Köditz noted a growing tendency for the vocational guidance and counselling of adults to **overcome the limitations of special action for adults in difficult situations and to develop into a recognized general social task.**[3]

Following this statement various participants in the conference commented on the state of vocational guidance and counselling in individual Member States of the EC.

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1 Country studies have been carried out for CEDEFOP on the state of vocational guidance and counselling for adults in Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom. See the bibliography attached to this report.

2 See Köditz, V., Vocational Guidance for Adults and Especially the Long-term Unemployed, Abridged version of the summary report and hypotheses for discussion, CEDEFOP, Berlin 1990, 14 pages, languages: D, EN, FR.

3 For further details see Köditz, V., Vocational Guidance and Counselling for Adults, Summary Report for CEDEFOP, Berlin 1989, 95 pages, languages: D, EN, FR.

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In the **southern countries of the European Community** the vocational guidance of adults has so far played a minor role despite high unemployment.

In **Greece** guidance, which is provided through both the Education and the Employment Ministry, consists primarily of vocational counselling for young people. Although a debate on vocational guidance for unemployed adults is currently gaining in importance, it has been confined so far to the process of selecting people for the labour administration's training schemes.

A feature of vocational guidance in **Portugal** is that, as it is closely associated with the schools, there is little guidance specifically for adults. Prompted in particular by experience in the United Kingdom, pilot projects for the vocational counselling of long-term unemployed adults with the emphasis on the promotion of personal initiative and self-confidence were launched in 1988.

In **Italy** a nationwide statutory arrangement for guidance at regional level is currently under discussion. Mr Meghnagi of the Institute for Economic and Social Studies in Rome hoped that experience in the other countries and a debate at Community level would lead to the further development of the vocational education and guidance system in his country.

As regards the situation in **Member States** where vocational guidance for adults already has a fairly long **tradition**, there were reports from Belgium and Denmark.

Mr Geers of the Belgian labour administration reported that most vocational counselling for unemployed adults in **Belgium** was provided by the labour administration, with support from local associations for work-oriented education, which also cooperated with public institutions. It was for the two Belgian communities to decide what form counselling should take.
In the **Flemish** community vocational counselling pilot projects, in which long-term unemployed adults were offered in-depth guidance interviews and on-going help, had been launched in four sub-regions since 1989. For some years there had also been information and training projects which were designed to lead to employment and were compulsory for the unemployed.
In the **French-speaking** community there were vocational counselling centres, most of their clients being long-term unemployed adults. The information and advice provided, which took account of their previous personal and professional experience and of their interests, was geared to persuading them to consider a different occupation. They were also able to gain some initial experience of the latest technology and methods used in given occupations.

Denmark provides an extensive range of vocational guidance and counselling for young people and adults, which has, however, been criticized in recent years as inadequate, especially with respect to the situation of the long-term unemployed. The system has consequently

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been reformed, and it is now a requirement throughout the country that the unemployed be offered a set sequence of guidance, training and work. The system is to be changed again in 1991 to make the offer of vocational training compulsory after only 12 months. An unemployed person first attends a set number of guidance interviews, and if his subsequent training does not lead to employment, he has a right to be offered a job. The reform also entails an improvement in the coordination of guidance and training. Committees consisting of representatives of the social partners and the public authorities have been set up to coordinate the collection of useful information, vocational guidance and employment-promoting measures.

These fairly general country descriptions were followed by reports from various participants in the conference on special projects and **vocational guidance instruments** in their countries.

Mrs O'Conghaile of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Dublin, referred to a pilot study carried out by the Foundation in **Denmark and Scotland**, which specifically concerned guidance and counselling in local labour market and training situations. An action research programme designed to help improve the coordination of the services offered at local level was to be launched in 1991.

Mr Jones, author of the British country report, described the **Employment and Training Advisory Service (ETAS) in Birmingham**. This local initiative consists of a special combination of guidance services, aimed particularly at unemployed adults, women and ethnic minorities. To bring its services as near to its clients as possible, ETAS has, in addition to a central guidance unit, 15 venues throughout the city (colleges, adult education centres and libraries) and is also in regular contact with various other (guidance) agencies, some working in an honorary capacity. Within this city-wide network ETAS is the core agency, offering the other services information, coordination and staff training. ETAS has also established an information service in a public library and cooperates with various special projects, e.g. a training programme for women in occupations which are typically a male reserve. As ETAS is considered something of a model institution, it influences the form taken by local programmes in other regions.
Mr Jones also described the **TAP** programme that had been set up by the government. The aim here was to provide local information on jobs and training opportunities through computer terminals attended by guidance specialists and located at various, easily accessible public places, such as supermarkets.

Mr de Vries, author of the Dutch country report, welcomed the networking strategy presented at the conference, but emphasized the danger of the fragmentation of the guidance services on which this approach was based. The **Netherlands** was trying to counter this problem with **institutional integration** by setting up **"regional vocational guidance**

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centres", where the guidance services of public, non-profit and private agencies could, to some extent at least, be combined. Mr de Vries saw this scheme as having the advantage of professionalizing the guidance services, making the processing and provision of information more effective and improving transparency for those seeking advice.

In the same context Mr Jaeckle of Centre INFFO, the author of the French country report, described the local or regional cooperation committees (**Comités de bassin d'emploi**) in France, where representatives of the social partners, the public authorities, social movements and associations exchange information, develop schemes relevant to employment in the region concerned and encourage the initiation of appropriate projects.
Mr Jaeckle also reported on the **personal and professional review**, which is now offered at some 60 centres for young people and adults and was developed in France as an interinstitutional (ANPE, AFPE, the state education system and associations) and interdisciplinary (psychologists, trainers and job counsellors) exercise. The review, which takes several weeks, is so designed that the person seeking advice is able to take stock of the qualifications and skills he has acquired in his professional, personal and social life by using a structured set of instruments (aptitude tests, questionnaires, personality profiles, etc.) and, on this basis, to develop a personal professional project and put it into effect.

The reports from the various countries made it clear that the structures and provision of vocational guidance and counselling for adults differ quite considerably from one Member State to another.

The discussion centred primarily on vocational guidance and counselling for **unemployed** adults. It was agreed that expert guidance must extend beyond the immediate need for reintegration into the labour market and offer the unemployed help with their personal stabilization, orientation and motivation and that optimum results could be achieved only a voluntary basis. It was also realized, however, that guidance was bound to be confronted with a conflict of political, economic and personal interests.

A particular problem for vocational guidance and counselling referred to was the difficulty of **motivating** unemployed adults with a history of social and educational disadvantages and disappointments, stabilizing their lives and persuading them to continue their training when they could not be offered a specific job. Professor Lehnhart, author of the German country report, gave examples of innovative projects in the Federal Republic (e.g. Beschäftigungs-GmbH in Karlsruhe) which combined guidance, initial and continuing training, social work, the opportunity to repeat general basic training, and employment, the aim being not only to train the participants in the projects for the labour market but also to pave the way for them to set up in business on their own.

It was also said, however, that the work of the guidance services must be judged in terms not only of the guidance given to unemployed adults

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but also of how effectively they dealt with different target groups. The German and Belgian labour administrations felt that vocational guidance agencies had a duty not only to help their clients out of emergency situations but also to provide the individual and the business community with the best possible decision-making aids through counselling. Mr Meghnagi saw vocational guidance in this context as an instrument for improving social justice when the transition was made to initial training, continuing training and employment.

2. The "Europeanization" of vocational guidance

Dr Leve explained the implications which the Federal Institute of Labour believed the completion of the internal European market in 1992 would have for the work of the guidance services.

Along with placement, the promotion of vocational training and vocational rehabilitation, measures to safeguard and create jobs, the payment of unemployment benefit and labour market and vocational research, vocational guidance was the responsibility of the labour administration in the Federal Republic of Germany (Federal Institute of Labour), a self-administered institution which in principle is independent of the government.

Dr Leve defined vocational guidance as the provision of advice and information on the choice of an occupation, complemented by careers guidance, information on assistance available to individuals and placement in training schemes. In the Federal Republic of Germany - as in all the other Member States - these activities were focused almost exclusively on the national situation and the development of the national labour market and occupations.

The completion of the single European market would make it necessary to expand the information base of national guidance systems and guidance itself to include the European dimension. If it was to perform the tasks required of it in the future, vocational guidance and counselling must also be able to provide clients with information on the labour market and vocational (training) situation in the other Member States. Dr Leve emphasized in this context the particular importance of vocational guidance along with training and labour market policy for the development of qualifications to meet needs. Competent vocational guidance would make a major contribution to enabling young people in particular to train for their future working lives, avoid unemployment at a later stage and help the economy, to providing the skilled workers of the future and to generally precluding economic and social costs due to misguided developments.

Although Dr Leve recognized that efforts had been made by the appropriate national authorities in the past to promote European cooperation in the field of vocational guidance, he did not think this development, though welcome, was enough.

In the first place, the exchange of experience among the national guidance services should be stepped up considerably with a view to promot-

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ing mutual understanding and improving the services provided at national level. In addition, with the completion of the single market fast approaching, cooperation among guidance services must be developed on the basis of the experience gained from the cooperation that had begun in border regions. This should lead to the **"Europeanization of vocational guidance"**, i.e. thinking and action in vocational guidance and counselling should be expanded in the future to include the European dimension.

To underline his comments, Dr Leve concluded by giving a few examples of opportunities for cooperation in the **European initial and continuing training of vocational guidance service staff** and the development of **European information and data processing systems**, which were included in the list of recommendations made by the participants in the conference.

These comments were generally welcomed, and it was noted that little interest was being shown in **European cooperation in vocational guidance** during the current debates on the Community's social and economic development. It was therefore important to stress the relevance of vocational guidance and counselling for young people and adults so that it might be taken into account in an appropriate context during the European debate.

In agreement with the other participants in the conference, Mr Politi suggested various ways of speeding up this debate.

He proposed, for example, that the **social partners** in the Member States should be informed of the conclusions drawn at the conference so that influence might be brought to bear on the decision-makers in the Member States and on the Commission.

His second proposal was that the formation of a **European pilot network of vocational guidance centres** based on current efficient projects should be encouraged. The aim should be to bring about innovative developments in vocational guidance by pooling national resources and skills. The documentation on this exemplary approach could then be used to accelerate the national and European development of the vocational guidance services.

He also referred to the important role played by CEDEFOP as a platform for **bringing experts together**, for an effective exchange of information and for more efficient planning of action.

Mr Politi raised the general question of the **possibility of financing European vocational guidance projects**, which he felt could be answered only by reference to the importance of vocational guidance for the protection of jobs and the solution of the unemployment problem. New opportunities in this respect might also arise from the need for guidance and the interest in cooperation in the **Eastern European countries**.

In the ensuing discussion it was felt that the proposed creation of a European pilot vocational guidance network would have the advantage of improving the quality of guidance in the Member States, especially where the debate and guidance were not yet far advanced.

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The "Europeanization" of vocational guidance was also felt to be necessary in view of the likely **mobility in the European labour market**, although its future scale was still disputed. In this context Mr Morin, head of the European Community's programme of action to combat long-term unemployment (ERGO), presented this programme, which is now being set up to document exemplary programmes and projects with the help of a network of correspondents and contacts in the Member States. He felt this system might be taken as a basis for deliberations on the creation of a **European information system** relevant to guidance.

3. Approaches to cross-frontier vocational guidance

Mr Kappenstein of the Büro für Sozialplanung in Trier quoted from a study currently being made for CEDEFOP on **approaches to cross-frontier vocational guidance in the areas where France, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Federal Republic of Germany have common borders.**[1]

Mr Kappenstein saw the forms of binational cooperation described in the study, which are to be found in all the countries of this region, as a precondition for **cross-frontier guidance in the region** as European development continues. As a qualitatively new step, he proposed that vocational guidance should be given a status all its own and that the countries concerned should agree on institutionalized forms of cooperation.

Recommendations of the participants in the conference

The discussion of the problem areas referred to above led to the following recommendations being made:

Developments in the common market and the growing mobility of labour in Europe are making new demands on the work of the guidance services in the Member States. They and their staff will be able to incorporate the **European dimension** in their work only if they see it not as a mere addition to their tasks but as a **qualitative change in their work**. To support vocational guidance measures at national and Community level, it should be ensured that:

- the tasks of vocational guidance for young people and adults are taken into account in all relevant - present and future - Community programmes, any programme which concerns vocational training, ca-

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1 See Kappenstein, P., and Jensen, K., Cross-frontier Vocational Guidance in the Saarland-Lorraine-Luxembourg-Rhineland-Palatinate Region, Present Situation and Future Prospects, A Study Commissioned by CEDEFOP, Berlin 1990 (to be published shortly)

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reers and employment or seeks to encourage vocational mobility and to provide better information on the employment and training situation being considered "relevant";

- the Commission includes the vocational guidance of young people and adults in its regular reports;
- regular meetings of the senior staff of agencies responsible for the vocational guidance of young people and adults are held, similar to the meetings already held on vocational training, the labour market and employment;
- exchanges of ideas and reciprocal visits by practitioners in the field of vocational guidance and counselling for young people and adults are encouraged; the exchange of labour administration officials, which is partly funded by the Community, could serve as a model;
- "centres of excellence" in the Member States are instructed to enable vocational guidance staff to gain an insight into new innovative projects, to document and evaluate such projects and to publish the findings, so that similar measures in the Member States may be improved and innovative efforts in other countries (especially in Eastern Europe) encouraged;
- cooperation agreements on the continuing training of counsellors, e.g. through the establishment of a European Academy for the Continuing Training of Vocational Guidance Officers, are concluded;
- funds are provided for projects, studies and conferences attended by representatives of agencies in different Member States to discuss subjects of mutual interest, e.g.
  1. structures and working methods of the guidance services and their advantages and disadvantages;
  2. the use of computers;
  3. the establishment of an information system covering aspects of vocational guidance of mutual interest - similar to the Community's MISEP publication on labour market policy;
  4. the establishment of cross-frontier guidance and placement systems and of special documentation for guidance workers based on an evaluation of initial experiments in border areas;
  5. experience with various psychological test methods, most of which have been developed in North America, and their value in practical guidance work;
  6. international seminars on subjects such as those referred to in the summary report and country reports on guidance for young people and in similar reports at Community level;

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- agreements are concluded on support for database systems and publications, such as a **European guidance handbook**, to help vocational guidance staff in their cross-frontier guidance work.

Finally, thought should be given to the possibility of Community funds being provided for a **Community programme of action** for **vocational guidance** - by analogy with the Community's programmes of action relating to the transition of young people from school to adult and working life and the PETRA and IRIS vocational training programmes. A programme of this kind would have the advantage of enabling the Member States to implement multiannual interdepartmental and interinstitutional exchange and seminar programmes involving various projects.

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These reports are available on request from CEDEFOP. The abridged version of the summary report will be available in [illegible]e near future.

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